

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES
STATE OF VERMONT

361.01.11a

Suicide Prevention - Safety Smock Protocol

8/11/99

new

Approved: Thomas A. Powell, Ph.D.
Clinical Director



I. Introduction

As part of the Department's efforts to reduce risk of suicidal behavior among inmates, it is periodically necessary to remove certain items of inmate clothing that might be fashioned into a noose. If it is deemed necessary to remove shirt and pants, alternative arrangements for warmth and cover will be desirable. The Safety Smock offers one option.

II. Protocol

1. The Safety Smock is for use as clothing for inmates identified as acutely suicidal. It is to be used as one part of a comprehensive suicide prevention program and shall not be used as an alternative to other suicide prevention requirements, directives, protocols and practices.
2. Inmates shall exchange all clothing, including socks and underwear, for the smock.
3. The scratchy hook side faces in; the fuzzy loop side faces out.
4. The smock can be adjusted for length at the shoulders.
5. Put the smock on handcuffed inmates by undoing and then reattaching the shoulder adjustments.
6. While the smock is fire resistant, it is not impossible to ignite. Any inmate permitted to smoke while wearing the smock must be directly supervised by staff.
7. Machine wash and tumble dry after use. The smock may be laundered using any standard disinfection process, although hot water and chlorine bleach will shorten the lifespan. Do not wash with other garments.
8. The smock should be used only as long as the suicide risk persists or until other safety arrangements are made. It is a short-term alternative. Mental health and security staff shall assess suicidal cases on an individual basis to respond to ongoing self-threats as appropriate.
9. Security supervisors and mental health professionals may authorize the use of the smock as deemed appropriate.